

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## STEEL SHOT REGULATIONS FOR WATERFOWL HUNTING AFFECT PORTIONS OF 32 STATES IN 1978

Parts of all four migratory waterfowl flyways will be affected by steel shot regulations for the 1978-79 hunting season, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The steel shot zones for duck and goose hunting next fall were published in the Federal Register February 28, 1978. They describe such zones in 32 States. This is the third year of a phased implementation of nontoxic steel shot for waterfowl hunting, which began with zones in the Atlantic Flyway and spread westward each year.

Zones identified for steel shot use are areas in which the deposits of lead shot by hunters are most concentrated, and the ingestion of spent lead pellets by waterfowl occurs most frequently. Lead pellets are toxic when mistaken for seeds or grit, and the ingestion of spent lead pellets is estimated to cause the deaths of 2 million waterfowl each year.

Approximately 22 percent of the waterfowl harvest of the United States occurs within the zones that have been identified for the next hunting season.

In 1976 and 1977 steel shot was manufactured in 12 gauge shells only. As a result, the Fish and Wildlife Service published regulations permitting those using guns of gauges other than 12 gauge to continue to hunt in the zones with toxic shotshell loads. This amendment to the regulation is being considered for 1978, and is expected to be published in final form in the next few weeks. The Service has announced that it does not intend to continue the exception for gauges other than 12 gauge beyond the 1978 hunting season.

Detailed descriptions of the specific designated zones for 1978 will be listed in press releases to be issued by the Service's six regional offices. The States in which zones will occur are as follows:

Atlantic Flyway--Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Mississippi Flyway--Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Central Flyway--Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas.

Pacific Flyway--California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.